

ASSESSMENT REPORT ON PASTORALIST EDUCATION



KAPOETA NORTH COUNTY

September 2020

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Introduction

Kapoeta North County is one of the counties in Eastern Equatoria state where AVSI is implementing Education Cannot Wait project entirely. This county is divided into 7 payams (Paringa, Lomeyen, Najjie, Musingo, Naakwa, Chumakori and wokubu,), the county is of Toposa tribe divided into two clans; Paringa and Riwoto clans. The two communities live in harmony through sharing same social and cultural events like Gkorot and Akidam dam dance, inter marriage even share same grazing land. The community live purely pastoralist life where they value their livestock (cattle, goats, and sheep) more than anything even own lives.

Just like other counties in Greater Kapoeta, the county is experiencing long dry season (semi-arid) in most cases from November to May. In these months, the communities move their livestock in search of water to what is known as ‘Cattle camp’ and return once rain starts falling around May or June each year. It should be noted that during this time, children, youth, women and men move to stay in cattle camps, thus many people established themselves permanently.

The county is facing myriad challenges in education despite of nice permanent schools, furnished with infrastructures like classrooms, latrines and kitchens. Barriers in accessibility remain a major problem to children especially girls considering community adoration for cultural norms and social practices.

Focus group discussion methodology

The assessment on pastoralist education in Kapoeta North started with focus group discussions conducted by AVSI with funding from Education Cannot Wait. This assessment was carried out in three payam of the county; Paringa, Najjie and Lomoyen respectively, focus on small groups of people (5-8) segregated by gender/sex, age. The categories of people targeted were; men, women, boys, girls, religious leaders and education actors/ leaders in the community as outlined below;

- 3 Women groups of 8 representatives (24 members)
- 3 Men groups of 8 representatives (24 members)
- 3 Boys/youth groups of 5-8 representatives (24 members)
- 3 girls/ youth groups of 5-8 representatives (24 members)
- 1 Religious leaders of 3 representatives (3 members)
- 1 Local leaders of 8 representatives (8 members)
- 1 County officials of 8 representatives (8 members)
- ✓ 115 members were met during FGD



Men FGD in Paringa payam

The groups were divided according to age and sex purposely to give freedom in expression of views and avoid superiority complex and suppression of views by men. The approach was useful because young girls, women and boys intensely discussed challenges facing education in pastoralist community.

Key Findings

❑ *Habit/ Activities of pastoralist community*

Like other African communities, Pastoralists in Kapoeta North share similar gender roles and responsibilities assigned to men, women, girls and boys. Among pastoralist communities, women’s day look busiest/demanding compared to the rest, their activities cut across all gender roles. While, girls’ roles are related to those of women and they are couched to become good house wives by their mothers/women. With regard to men and boys their role is majorly grazing cattle, goats and sheep. Young boys graze goats and sheep while men and youth look after cattle.

It’s important to note that in pastoralist communities, gender roles differ from season to season, meaning activities conducted in dry season are different from wet seasons. When planning for pastoralist education, it is paramount that actors know which activities communities are engaged in and how to integrate it with education. Below are some of the activities done during dry season and wet season;

Wet season/raining season

Women/girls	Cultivation, harvesting, fencing garden, household chores, scaring birds, milking, taking care of children, collecting firewood and fetching water etc
Men/boys	Grazing cattle, fencing garden and scaring birds, provision of security to the community in case of attack

Dry season

Women/girls	Harvesting, household chores, collection of wild fruit, building houses, milking, taking care of young children, watering cows
Men/boys	Grazing and digging well in cattle camps,

NB: The communities are engaged in these activities throughout the day from morning to evening hours (6:00am -8:00 pm).

❑ *Community/pastoralist perceptions about education*

The community views toward education is paradoxical from place to place (boma to boma), for those living in so-called 'urban area' perceive education as acquisition of new knowledge which is to some extent good for them, but the case is totally unique in rural areas, although at least women groups showed willingness to educate their children. Below are some views shared and observed during FGD;

- Education is role of government and NGOs, in other words, education must be entirely for free. It is the government and NGOs to support children education and paying teachers. This is why in Kapoeta North parents do not support their children in schools. According to girls group, it is a child to take care of themselves in all aspects related to education.
- Schools are where people pray, prepare people for baptism. Some section of community members believe that children go to school to pray and be taught to prepare for baptism, therefore non-believing families don't send their children to school.
- Education destroys tradition. The community don't value girls' education completely, they think girls are source of wealth (bring more cows) and they consider education as something that destroys their cultures, hence elders address it to loss of future. Education changes children habits, language and dressing code which is culturally unacceptable and it is meant for people living in towns, parents also fear that girls will become pregnant while at school.
- Lack of school ownership. The community do not take ownership of schools facilities and destroy them; in Riwoto and Lomeyen primary schools, communities have completely destroyed the school fence. Leaving schools opened for grazing, in some schools classrooms are turned into *kraal* full of animal dung and human faeces, school furniture have been vandalized, school boreholes are overtaken by community and children hardly get access to water and children eat very late due to hard accessibility of water greatly affecting school feeding program.
- Refusal to send section of children to school. All first born children are not sent to school, they have to look after cattle. Children are divided according to parents' interest and it is the responsibility of a man to assess children for education and for cattle rearing. This assessment varies reversely according to children's sex, for boys the most stubborn ones will be sent to school to disturb teachers and in some homes, the active boys are sent to school while the dumps have to look after cattle and likewise. On the other side, the most active girls have to support their mothers in home chores and the less active are sent to school.

- Cultural background: pastoralist communities have strong affection to cattle more than education. Animals are for specific traditional activities in the community particularly marriages.

❑ *Needs for pastoralist education*

Based on the findings of the FGD, members were able to discuss with justifications dire needs for pastoralist education in Kapoeta North in order to reinforce community behaviour change and habits that are harmful to the community development;

- Want to live like other community who are educated. In comparison with other communities, Toposa feel they are far much behind in education and lifestyle thus pastoral education is vital to eradicate ignorance/illiteracy.
- Eradicate nakedness/ want to put on clothes
- Want to know how to read and write to simplify communication, especially from the villages to the cattle camps (through written letters)
- Desire for their children to work with organizations to develop their own community, rather than depending on people coming from outside and at the end abandon them.
- Need more role model/leaders in the community: majority of the Toposa that are educated do not live in the rural areas and they rarely go back to their villages. So, more educated Toposa means more role models in the community.
- Education would help to bring happiness and peace in the community and within the families: it will reduce gender inequality, GBV risks and cattle raiding. Education is the only way to promote harmonious living in the community.

❑ *Effects of Cattle rearing on Education*

Education and animal rearing are two different and independent activities in the community that are even parallel, it is at the interest of the community to prioritize between the two activities. Being pastoral community with a lot of values attached to animal, there's handful attention to education with massive effect as outlined below;

- Division of children some for cattle rearing and others for schools. The criteria of selecting children are based on the following;
 - Stubborn boys are to go to schools
 - First born boys are automatic assigned to look after cattle while committed girls remain at home

- Based on school performance
- Agreement between parents: despite women are more committed to education, the final decision is for the husband.
- Assessment of children is for men and children to look after cattle are proud because the wealth belongs to them.

The dedicated children to cattle will not be sent to school in fear that they will quit grazing and stay in school leaving animals unattended to. To make it worst, it is very hard to enrol children who are used in grazing.

- Low enrolment and attendance of children in schools. For example, during dry season children go very far in cattle camp from November to May and in these months the enrolment of children in first term is very low, in rainy season children will be engaged in looking after goats and sheep throughout the day hence children barely attend school.

❑ *Integrating pastoralism with education*

Cattle is the main source of wealth in the community and it can also be used to support education of other family members, so it is necessary that animals are attended to at all cost by some section of children. During FGD, members were keenly to discuss how pastoralism can be integrated with education so that all children get opportunity to study. The following were mentioned as alternative to ensure all children can study with all justifications;

1. **Early morning classes.**

Some members during FGD proposed early morning lessons from 7:00-9:00 am every day so that children who go to graze animals at 10:00 am, after having attended school first. The suggestion is good but the challenges are many: the time may be too short being only 3 hours a day, how effective will it be for teachers and children to consistently maintain the time, the children in lower classes may not be favoured in term of time and those who walk long distances. It only works during wet season, but not in dry season where children move in cattle camps and grazing starts earlier than 10:00 am.

2. **Evening classes**

This is the most preferred time suggested by over 80% of group members and time is from 6:00- 10:00 pm. At this time, all animals would be returned home from grazing land and children will effectively study without any anxieties. The approach seems better for them though there are issues that need to be clarified;

- Availability of light to study at night;
- Motivation of teachers for extra responsibility;
- Feeding program because these children may have not got food at home since families eat late in the evening;
- Tolerant to hygiene of children because they have little or no time to prepare for classes;
- Younger children may not attend from 6:00- 10:00 pm;

3. Home based education for far away children who don't get access to schools

This is a home/community-based education care for ECD children who cannot move long distances to school and are unable to attend early morning or evening classes so that they are introduced to education before taped to animal rearing.

4. Parents take grazing roles during school days

They also pointed out that parents should take greater roles in animal grazing in order to allow children to go to school, while children will support them during free days. This approach is useful for some parents while others complained of old age that they cannot run after stubborn cows and they cannot look after cattle, goats and sheep concurrently.

5. Introduction of AES like Literacy and numeracy programme, accelerated learning programme to youths and parents who cannot go to normal class with young children.

6. Mobile school in cattle camps;

This is one of the proposed methods to educate children who go to cattle camp form November to May each year and are not able to enrol in school for an academic year. The children that go to cattle camps do not have access to education and most of them never attended primary or pre-primary education in their lives. This could help children to learn basic literacy and numeracy in cattle other than leaving them to live tradition life without formal education.

According to the groups there are some positive and negative aspects to establish mobile schools in cattle camps that would help to make decisions;

Positive aspects

- Availability of children in the cattle camps that can be taught in the evening hours

- Presence of some community members who have drop out of primary school that can give instructions to children
- It is possible in some cattle camps, like in Lourienkali and Kachinga, where there is no insecurity and people are permanently living there.

Negative aspects

The program existed before but collapsed due to the following reasons;

- Busy day in cattle camps. There are too many activities in cattle camps that make it hard for children to attend to teachers. Children/youth move very far grazing and come back to the camp late and take long time watering their animals.
 - Accessibility of cattle camps. Cattle camps are inaccessible considering lack of roads and communication, it is almost impossible for an organization to monitor the teaching progress.
 - Insecurity, was the major threat to mobile school in cattle camp considering that this program needs to be conducted in the evening with light. The community fear that light will expose them to their enemies/raiders (Buya, Didinga) and eventual attacks.
 - Lack of educated people in cattle camps to offer instructions to the children therefore, instructors need to be hired and taken in cattle camp. Given situations in cattle camps/harsh life, it is very hard to maintain such people in the camps.
 - Traditional living. People in cattle camps follow strictly culture and customs of their society where they consider education as something that spoils their children, it makes ladies prostitute and if children are educated, they will abandon cattle rearing which is highly regarded and go to town. With is perception in minds, it is very hard for anyone to teach their children and if not from the community a teacher will be beaten because they are considered as enemies that want to spoil the culture.
7. **Holiday lessons program** where children who were grazing will be enrolled.
 8. **Establishment of secondary schools** accessible both in the morning and evening to promote continuity to secondary level after completion of primary.

- Parents' roles in educating their children

Parents in pastoral communities play minimum roles in supporting their children in school, according to girls interviewed in St. Mary Magdalene; none of them get support from their parents and it is their responsibilities to take care of themselves at school. Furthermore, parents believe that once a child goes to school, he/she must come back home with some money because education is to add more cows.

Girls and boys met during focus groups were able to testify that in many occasions their parents demand money from them once from school and some children were stopped from further school attendance.

In Toposa, women are the ones playing greater roles in pushing for children education especially for girls by providing scholastic materials, encouraging children to study, and breakfast while men are the final decision makers and to divide children in the family (for cattle grazing and for education) through the criteria listed above.

❑ *Community Perception on girls' education*

Generally, there is negative attitude towards girls' education among the Toposa in Kapoeta North. The community believes that girls are meant to bring wealth/cows. By sending them to school, the family will incur in a loss of wealth. In addition, girls are to support their mothers at home and prepare to become a good housewife other than wasting time in school. This attitude brings to the refusal to pay/support girls in school (none of the girls in FGD held in St. Mary's Magdalene received support from home)

According to the perception of the communities in the county, education also spoil girls (Nakwakenjen) or criminal, in different ways:

- They will become prostitutes 'Emoit' (all modern habits are considered act of prostitution),
- School girls don't accept traditional arrangement for marriage something perceived by the community as disobedience An example was provided of an ongoing school girl whom father arranged for her marriage. The case was reported to police and the man was arrested. This made parents to withdrew their daughters from schools.
- Girls will get pregnant in school: parents believe there are a lot of engagement in mixed schools and this will make their girls lose social values hence less cows will be paid. This concern is real and parents prefer girls' boarding schools or schools where they are assured of their girls' safety to mixed schools with less security for ladies. That is why St. Bakhita Girls' school, St. Patrick, Kuron and St. Mary Magdalene have more girls' enrolled than other government schools thus parents who can't afford such schools keep their daughters at home.
- Negative says about girls education in the community like education to girls is a curse because the parents will not get cows/wealth and no respect will be accorded to such families. These says have discouraged many parents to send their daughters to schools.
- Forced marriages and secret marriage arrangements of young girls (aged from 10 years), especially those in school so that the demanding groom will be fined high. Culturally, forced marriage is accepted because there are a lot of social attachment compared to graduation.

It's important to know that in pastoral community, parents don't consider girls' age as requisite for marriage because of illiteracy, they observe and monitor breast development.

❑ *Teachers' motivation*

This is one of the underlying challenges affecting education generally in South Sudan and specifically in pastoral communities where the number of educated people is extremely limited. It was one of the concerns strongly discussed by FGD that remained a big question though the group suggested in kind support for teachers but it's not sustainable enough.

Teachers are so much frustrated especially in government schools due to lack of salaries that even don't come consistently. Many teachers in Kapoeta North deserted the schools, low/no teachers' daily attendance, no teaching and heavy drinking in the community that the FGD were able to talk about.

In the past majority of the teachers working in the schools in the county were coming from other areas of South Sudan (Acholi, Madi, Kakua, etc) and from Kenya/Uganda. Once the crisis started almost all the teachers run away due to low motivation and the local communities are not having enough skilled teachers to run the schools. This problem made parents to withdraw their children from school to work at home especially girls in fear of their security (cohabiting with men) resulting to increase forced early marriages of school aged children.

❑ *Challenges facing pastoral Education/ schools*

Kapoeta North county has 8 primary schools (Karakumonge, Choroi, Paringa, Riwoto, Lomoyen, St. Mary Magdalene and Lokwamor, Najjie) and one non-functional secondary school(Riwoto SS). In spite of many education implementing partners like ADRA, OPRD, Save the Children and AVSI, schools still face immense challenges which are sensitive to parents and perpetrate weak education systems in Kapoeta north.

- Lack of water within schools is a serious problem facing schools in Kapoeta North, the existing schools lack water except community boreholes that serve the entire boma. Children have to move long distance 6-7 minutes to access water which cannot favour children in lower classes since they can't stay without water and move long distances. The general insufficient lack of water in the county is seriously affecting children enrolment and attendance especially for girls who have to walk long distances each day in search of water; worst during dry season where they are to move in cattle camps to look for it to water animals definitely limiting children school accessibility.

- Lack fence in schools; a part from St. Mary Magdalen, a catholic primary school, none of the schools have fence. The one in Lomeyen and Riwoto p/s were destroyed by the community leaving school unsafe to learners and difficult to control children in school.
- Insufficient school feeding program. Lack of food couple with lack of water in schools is a severe protection concern in Kapoeta north. Being the Toposa a pastoral community, farming is in small scale posing school children to hunger threat both at home and in school. Therefore, this results in a limited enrolment and attendance of children, especially children who move long distances and younger children who can't study without food and water. On the opposite side, children who goes for grazing can have access to milk.
- Lack of teachers in government schools. 'Education without teachers is like food without salt, few people eat it', said by FGD, and this problem is a big cancer to government schools in Kapoeta North. Many parents think sending to school is a waste of time since schools are without teachers, the existing ones are drunkard and they cannot teach complaining of lack of salaries.

Lesson learnt

The main recommendation, considered the findings of this assessment, is that any organization that wants to deal to educate Toposa people, should first take in consideration their cultural aspects and should develop a strategy that should not affect their traditions and believes. It is very important to start from the available resources:

- Considered that children are divided, who goes to school and who stays with the cattle, it is important to first start to target the children assigned to Education. The remoteness, the insecurity and the lack of will of the people in the cattle camp will prevent the success of the project.
- It would be very important to target young children that are not going to school, neither taking care of the cattle (ECD age children). There is high number in each boma and they are left without any guidance.
- To bring education to the communities so that they can control their girls. Based on the fear of their girls to get pregnant while at school and the limited number of functioning schools, parents use to behave in two opposite ways: the ones that are aware use to send their girls to Kapoeta, Narus, Kenya or Uganda, the ones opposing education will keep their daughters within the community blaming the other families that their girls will get spoiled in the schools because not controlled. If there could be at least a really functioning girls' schools in the county (a part from St. Mary Magdalen), families could send their girls to school and they can still control

them. In this way, other families can get familiar with the education system and will feel to control the girls.

- To reduce the targets to improve better monitoring and follow up in order “to do together”. Considered the big challenges to face and the reluctance of the local communities, it is important that people are accompanied in this process of awareness for education. It is a gradual step that may take years and it is important that communities are gradually mentored.
- To include practical subjects that can have an impact on people’s daily life. Despite a vast land and high availability of animals, Toposa do not use to get advantage from them and get transform them in resources. Education should be integrated with FSL trainings (on live stock, food production, etc) so that they can maximize their resources. This aspect, if having a positive and concrete impact, will play also the role to attract people.
- What about leveraging certain “preferences” of the local people. For instance, given the wish for nudity to stop, the supply of school uniforms could be viewed as a very strong incentive.

Conclusion

- Teachers’ motivation. For quality education to be realized in Kapoeta north, teachers’ well-being must be prioritized by government and partners or else nothing will move considering that many teachers deserted schools, many lost interest in teaching embarked on their own business that would benefit them and their families. In case it will not happen, families will as well get more and more demotivated and will refuse education.
- Mobile pastoralist schools in the cattle camp may not be a realistic option, considered the challenges listed in this report.
- Shift classes- morning and evening. This is the best pastoral education approached preferred by the FGD members as a way forward to integrate pastoralism/grazing with education. This approach will make all children attend to education and look after cows/animals at the same time other than division of children. In the morning hours (8:00 am- 2:00 pm) so that the children attended morning classes would go to grazing in the evening giving time for evening classes (5-10 pm) to children been grazing in the morning.
- School feeding programme is one of the most motivating factors to enrolment, attendance as well as early entrance. It has been witnessed that the schools with good feeding programme have overwhelming children a case in point is St. Mary Magdalene compared with other schools with insufficient/poor feeding programme. Parents in Kapoeta North prefer sending their children in schools that provide food to their children due to insufficient/ lack of food in the community.

- Leadership capacity building to develop laws that safeguard children/girls from forced marriages and secret marriage arrangement of ongoing school aged children and that punishes parents who refuse to enrol their children to school. It's paramount that partners work closely with community leaders and make them own community development/education initiatives for proper project sustainability.
- Partner strong coordination for visible impact. This is very important for comprehensive approach to community problems and avoid duplication of services, this can be done through coordination meetings and partner mapping.
- Community engagement and mobilization approach strengthened through awareness creation on the importance of education conducted in all the villages targeting men, women, youth and ongoing children and whole local leaders. SMC/PTA strengthening through capacity building trainings so that they are capable to maintain schools and encourage parents to send their children to schools.
- AES programmes to youth and parents. Support adult literacy through Accelerated learning program to youth and parents understand the real importance of education and motivate them to send their children to school. ALP can be integrated with catechists home based learning program in the community given the fact that they are more conversant with community and highly respected for easy acceptability.
- Continued support to girls in both day and boarding schools. Girls are more disadvantaged in the community as far as education is concerned. The support for girls should be based on the following;
 - Sponsorship to girls to avoid dropping out, it should be noted that parents in Kapoeta north do not support their children in schools and they assume that education is entirely for free. During the survey, it has been realised that if a girl/boy is supported beyond 15 years, he/she will continue with education and become flexible with the community complex ability.
 - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Management supplies like dignity kits, soap etc to improve retention of ladies in day and boarding schools.
- Water for pastoral education; the fact that Kapoeta North County has limited sources of water, there is urgent need for more boreholes to be drilled in schools and within the community. This will reduce burden of sending children moving long distance looking for water for home consumption and watering of animals spending the whole day. This will increase school accessibility because few people will go to cattle camps in search of water.